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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2009

In Today's Papers

Afghanistan-Pakistan Peace Summit in Ankara
Mainstream Sabah and Islamist-oriented Zaman report that Turkey has brought together the leaders of Afghanistan and Pakistan in Ankara yesterday. The presidents of Turkey, Afghanistan and Pakistan held a tripartite meeting in which, for the first time, the chiefs of General Staff, commanders of land forces and bureaucrats of intelligence offices of the three countries were also present. Presidents Abdullah Gul, Hamid Karzai and Asif Ali Zardari discussed regional and international matters that included counter terrorism. Sabah says Karzai and Zardari drafted a joint plan of action envisaging cooperation in the political, military and intelligence fields. The paper outlines the main elements of the action plan as follows: The leaders of the three countries will hold annual meetings; the Foreign Ministers of the two countries will hold annual meetings with representatives of their military and intelligence organizations; the three countries will set up a joint working group of diplomats and finally, the three countries will undertake steps to boost economic cooperation.

Erdogan: Cabinet Reshuffle Possible
Media outlets report Prime Minister Erdogan held a news conference Wednesday before departing for London to participate in the G-20 summit talks. Erdogan denied a Wednesday report in daily Sabah that six ministers, in a gesture to the PM, handed over their resignations during a cabinet meeting on Monday. Erdogan stressed cabinet meetings are closed to the press, and said he would "show the door" to the six ministers if the reporter can prove that the mentioned ministers leaked the report to the press.

After an eight-point drop in AKP party votes and the loss of 13 cities in March 29 local elections, the ruling AKP has rolled up its sleeves to "revitalize" the party and reshuffle the cabinet, according to papers. Papers expect Erdogan to make changes in the government and the party administration after completing his party's provincial conventions in October. The AKP's general convention is set to be held early November, but election results will force Erdogan to pull that date forward, papers speculate. "A cabinet overhaul might come any time; we are working on that," Erdogan told

the press yesterday.

Cicek's Remarks on DTP's Election Success Draw Reactions from Erdogan, DTP

Media outlets report about the controversy over Deputy Prime Minister Cemil Cicek's remarks on the election victory of Turkey's main Kurdish party DTP. Speaking to daily Hurriyet on Tuesday, Cicek implied that the victory of the DTP in Igdir, a province on the Turkish border with Armenia, could pose a national security risk. "The DTP won in Igdir. In other words, the DTP has pushed to the border with Armenia," Cicek said. "We may congratulate ourselves for winning in Ankara, and the CHP for winning in Izmir. All this cheerfulness, however, cannot help a province that has serious security problems -- we must pay attention there," particularly in light of Igdir's proximity to the border with Armenia, Cicek said.

PM Erdogan told the press yesterday Cicek's remarks were his "personal view." "This country belongs to all of us. We cannot allow such discrimination. The AKP won in Gaziantep and Hatay, two other border provinces," emphasized Erdogan. AKP deputy group chief Nihat Ergun said Cicek had to withdraw his statement. DTP deputy group chief Selahattin Demirtas said Cicek was trying to distract people from the AKP's election defeat. "The AKP lost was because their two-faced policies on the Kurds became apparent for all to see," Demirtas told Milliyet. DTP lawmaker Bengi Yildiz said they were planning to carry Cicek's remarks to the parliament.

Editorial Commentary on Post Election Analysis

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Yasin Dogan wrote in Islamist oriented Yeni Safak: "In the post election process, the ruling AKP will certainly review its organizational chart, its party board staffing, its strategy and rhetoric."

Kadri Gursel wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "The Kurdish issue has been the dominating factor in these elections, particularly in the southeast. A mayor from one of the Diyarbakir districts has made a remarkable come back with over 65 percent votes even though he was sacked from his duty after winning the 2002 local elections since he promoted city services in a multi-language format. Now with the March 29 outcome, the government has to acknowledge that Kurdish issue is a reality not only on cultural grounds but also on political grounds, and the government will move forward accordingly."

Cuneyt Arcayurek wrote in leftist nationalist Cumhuriyet: "Even though it sounds like a distant future we have to believe that the AKP will take proper steps to eliminate its anti-secular activities. What the CHP does now remains to be seen and who knows if the CHP will be able to open itself up and become a real popular party."

Hope and Controversy Surround G20

Media outlets pay close attention to the expectations for concrete results from the G20 meeting as protestors fill the streets of London to demonstrate against the current economic system. Mainstream Sabah calls the meeting "The Economy's Most Critical Summit." Far right Ortadogu headlines, "The World's Eyes Turn to the G20." Mainstream Vatan headlines, "The Summit to Solve the Crisis," and reports, "the views are very different" between "The industrial capitalists German and France," and the "financial capitalists the U.S. and the UK." Islamist-oriented Zaman reports, "Leaders Are Hopeful for a Joint Packet, And The World's Eyes are on London."

Liberal Radikal points out the significance of the meetings that are taking place on the sidelines in "Obama Made His First Contact with Russia and China," as "Obama starts the test of his international leadership abilities." Leftist Taraf headlines "Cold War in London," as "Obama wants a new packet to address the crisis but Merkel and Sarkozy say a new packet is impossible, and thus the summit is divided into two." Taraf also reports in "Look at me, Medvedev" that "President Obama warned Russian President Medvedev on

the topics of nuclear weapons and the struggle against terror." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak focuses entirely on Obama's dietary preference in the front page headline, "Did Obama Veto Pork" on the summit menu - in a reference to President Obama's preference to not eat pork.

Mainstream Hurriyet reports, "London Turns Into a War Zone," and the paper carries photos of violent protests in London. Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports, "Job Guarantees Are Wanted at the G20" as "The streets of London are filled with union representatives and academics who are demonstrating against capitalism."

Mainstream Vatan headlines, "The Summit to Solve the Crisis."

Mainstream Hurriyet reports, "London Turns Into a War Zone" in the middle of their front page.

Sabah at Guantanamo

Correspondent Bilge Eser is reporting from Guantanamo in mainstream Sabah this week. Today's headline reads "Defense of Torture from American Commanders," and notes, "Guantanamo Commander David Thomas answered questions about torture at Guantanamo by saying 'We are proud of what we did.'"

TV News (CNN Turk)

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Domestic

- Following the March 29 elections, the main opposition CHP pushed the button for changes in the party administration. Kemal Kilicdaroglu is expected to take a post in the party administrative board.

- Former Iranian president Mohammed Khatami will participate in the Alliance of Civilizations forum talks to be held in Istanbul on April 6-7.

- In March, Turkish exports fell 34.9 percent to USD 7.1 billion compared to the same month last year.

- Automotive companies in Turkey push the button for price hikes after recent government incentives helped them sell all cars in stock.

World

- The Financial Times writes NATO heads of government will try this week to heal a rift with PM Erdogan over the Turkish government's opposition to the Danish PM Rasmussen becoming the next secretary-general of the alliance.

- Cem Ozdemir, the co-chair of the German Green Party, was taken under a brief custody with his wife, Pia Castro, at Dulles Airport in Washington, D.C. Ozdemir said he was treated as if he was a terrorist, and that he was held for at least an hour.

- A source in Likud Party says PM Netanyahu's new government intended to distance itself from the US-sponsored Annapolis agreements on working toward a Palestinian state.

- President Obama and the Russian President Medvedev discuss plans to announce negotiations to draft a new arms control treaty.

- Middle East envoy Tony Blair says Palestinians must have their own state otherwise there will be little chance of the violence ever ceasing.

JEFFREY